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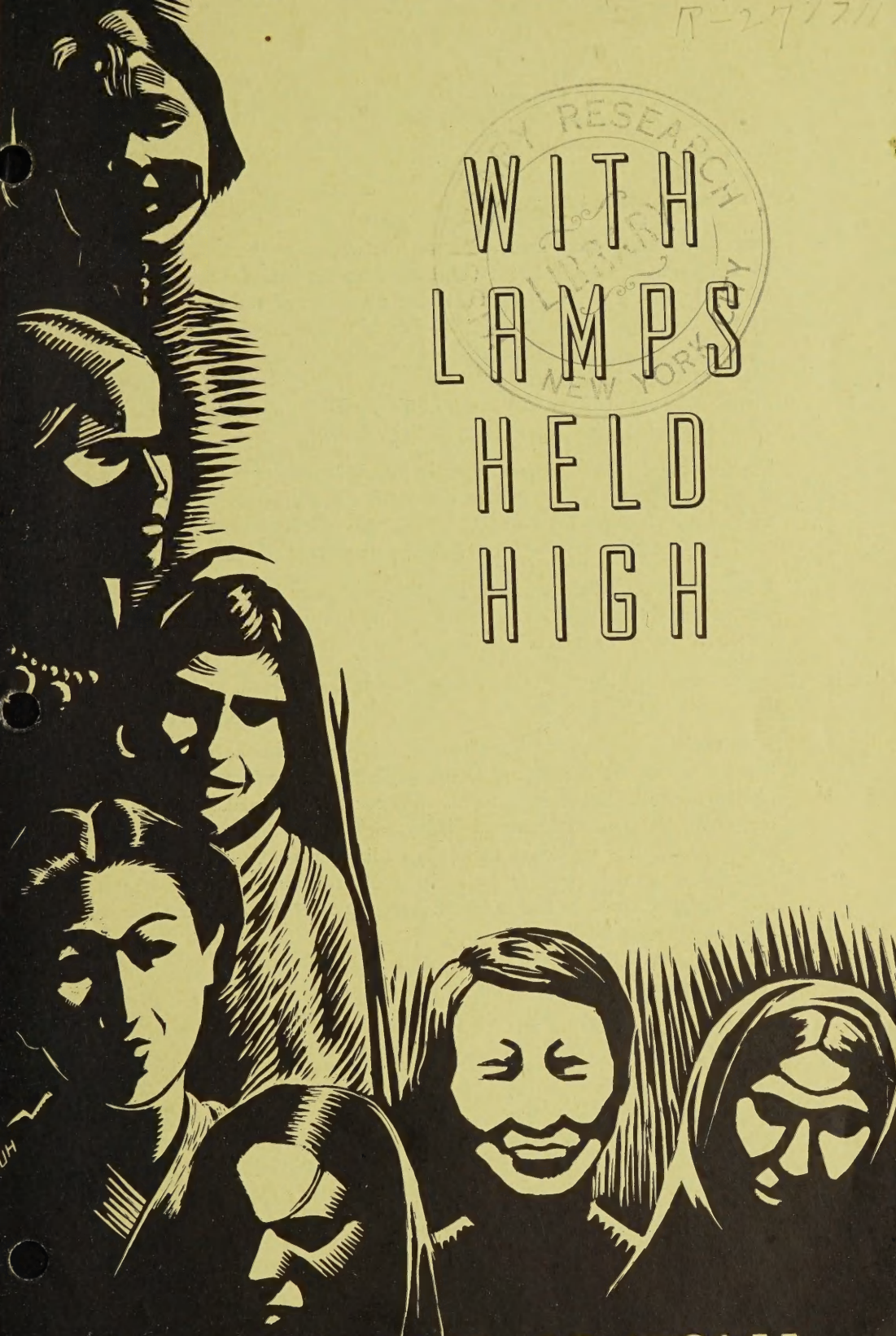

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WITH LAMPS HELD HIGH

RUTH SCUDDER DE WOLFE

To The Program Chairman:

This program represents a conference of the women of the Reformed Church, to which special delegates have been invited from the younger churches of Japan, China, India and Arabia, to share in the discussion of what Christ means to womanhood. It calls for five participants, the Leader, who stands for your own society, Miriam, a Christian girl from Bahrain, Arabia, Mrs. Tamaki (pron. Tom-ack-ee) Saito, a Christian woman from Tokio, Japan, Miss Spring-of-Living-Water, a teacher from Amoy, China, and Dr. Davanbu (pron. Dave-Ahn-boo) a Christian doctor from Vellore, India.

The program will be much more effective if the four delegates wear the costumes of their countries. (A limited number may be rented from the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, Reformed Church in America, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City, for from 25 to 35 cents each, plus postage and insurance.)

It is urged that those taking part be given their lines before the program, so they may read them over several times, and try to speak them as they think the actual characters would do.

A chart-map of each of our four fields may be had for 15 cts., or the set of four may be had for 50 cts.

Many societies are forming loan libraries, using books on the various program topics to enrich the background of the members and increase their knowledge and interest in the subjects discussed. The book "Women and the Way," price one dollar, is especially recommended as developing the topic *"Christ and Womanhood."* It is a series of articles by leading Japanese, Chinese and Indian Christian women, as well as nationals of other lands, explaining what the women of these countries owe to Christ. It may be ordered through the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions.

WITH LAMPS HELD HIGH

WORSHIP SERVICE

Hymn: Lord of All Being, Throned Afar, vs. 1, 4, 5, # 85 Reformed Church Hymnal, or

Lead on, O King Eternal, # 403 Reformed Church Hymnal

Meditation: Let us read first a prayer thousands of years old, a cry of longing from the heart of one of India's searching children:

> "From the unreal, lead me to the Real;
> From darkness, lead me to Light;
> From death, lead me to Immortality."

And then this triumphant answer from II Corinthians 4:6 :

> "God—who commanded light to shine out of darkness is He who has shone in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory, which is radiant in the face of Christ."

If you should wander into a cathedral in a small village in central Europe, you would catch your breath in wonder at the beauty of the delicate stone traceries and the glowing colors of the windows. But you would look in vain for any visible means of lighting the building, and if you asked the reason, this is the story you would hear:

When the old Duke who planned the Cathedral had seen the last stone in place, he called together all the village worshippers and said to them: "This building of God I dreamed of so long ago is now ready for you, but instead of putting in lamps, I want to place in the hands of each of you a little bronze lamp to take with you whenever you go to God's House. The first one who enters will light the lamp of the next, till all are lit. Remember, if one of you fails to bring his lamp, some little corner in God's House will be dark. But if each one of your lamps is burning there, His whole church will be radiant with the light. He needs you every one."

Our Father, too, in His great dream for the world, has given a lamp to each child of His to light some dark corner. He, too, must wait until those who have seen the radiance of Christ's face will kindle the lamps of those who know Him not. How long He has waited, and how He rejoices that those who love Him are holding their lamps high to kindle those in faraway lands, until in India and China, in Japan and Arabia, that has been dark so long, little lamps begin to flicker and shine for Him.

If our love is too dim, the light from our lifted lamps does not fall on those who wait with darkened lamps; some corner of Christ's great church that stretches around the world will remain dark. But if we love enough, if we pray enough, if we gladly offer our very selves as the lamp burns its oil to the last drop, then those who wait in darkness *shall* see the light and that day *shall* come when "the earth shall be full of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea."

Prayer: Dear Father of us all, we do thank Thee for these lamps Thou hast kindled in our hearts. We thank Thee for all their light means to us, for the love and happy comradeship of our Christian homes, for the joyous realization that each of us is Thy child, infinitely precious in Thy sight, and that Thou dost need us, every one.

Help us, Father, to lift these lamps until we see the need of Thy other children, until we see the world as Thou dost see it, as one great family, and long to kindle every darkened lamp. Use us, Father; consecrate each lamp of love, that it may bring those that wait in darkness to that true light that shines in Christ Jesus. Amen.

(The participants sit in five chairs in a semi-circle facing the society members, the Leader at one end. Behind them may be hung the maps of Arabia, India, China and Japan, showing our mission stations. See *to the Program Chairman.*)

Leader: I'm sure when we heard of the Madras Conference last December, where four hundred and seventy-one delegates from sixty-nine lands all over the world sat side by side as brothers and sisters of one family in Christ, and talked together of His church, some of us thought rather wistfully of the wonderful fellowship and privilege we were missing.

So we cannot be thankful enough for the worldwide vision which came to our Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, of a conference for *all* the women of our Reformed Church, not only those in America, but those in our younger sister-churches as well. Think of it—here we are sitting side by side with these sister-representatives from China, India, Japan and even our newest church in Arabia! We can get from them the answers we have tried to find in books and dreary statistics, and can hear from their own lips of their countries' problems and hopes in Christ.

I think we shall begin our discussion of what Christ means to the womanhood of the world by calling on the representatives of our newest sister-church, Miriam from Arabia. (Turning to Miriam) We are so very happy to welcome you into the fellowship of our Reformed Church Conference as a fellow member of Christ's great congregation which stretches around the world. I'm afraid you'll find us sadly ignorant of your country!

Most of us think of it as the land of Sinbad the Sailor and the wonders of the Arabian Nights. But we want you to tell us not of the Night, but of the new *Day* Christ is bringing to you Arabian women.

Miriam (rises and "salaams" by placing her right hand to her forehead; she gives her part either standing or sitting): I give you the Arab greeting, my sisters: Salaam Alay-kum. That means "Peace with you," but when I say it, it means much more, for it means the peace of Christ which no one but He can give.

When you asked me to come, I was afraid, for I thought how could some one who has seen so little save the sea with its tiny pearl and fishing boats, or the bazaars and the camels with their tinkling bells, how could some one as ignorant as I help you American women with your freedom, your education and opportunities? And then I remembered that God can use the humblest little clay lamp to carry His light, and I thought perhaps *because* I had so little and Christ has given me so much, I could make you more thankful for the gifts you take for granted.

When I see your groups of happy, laughing children on the street, I think with a choke in my throat how I loved to run and play, but when I became nine, I was told I was too old to run about without a veil and must stay inside our dark little date-palm hut. I remember escaping many times at first into the sunshine, and being punished and told such a bold girl would never get a husband. Our home was dark inside with more than the absence of sunshine — dark with quarreling and jealousy and fear. None of the women could read or write; Arab women are not considered worth wasting learning on. Our proverb says "Knowledge belongs to man, ignorance to woman. His to command, hers to obey blindly." A woman is only a toy to her husband; if she displeases him or bears no sons, he can easily divorce her or get a new wife. Fear breeds suspicion and jealousy; add boredom, and can you blame us if we quarreled over trifles? If you had no telephones or radios, books or magazines, and nothing interesting or uplifting came into your lives, what would you talk about?

You can imagine my excitement when we heard of the fair-haired lady starting a school for girls in Bahrain, and how I teased and wept till my widowed mother let me go. You who send your little girls to school as a matter of course, can you imagine what a Christian school means to a little Arab girl? I was like a drooping palm tree which had never known the sun, and suddenly it shone on me, and I drank it in! At first it was the freedom and the play with other children behind the safe walls of our school that delighted me. But when I learned to read what a new world opened to me! Greater still was the light that broke on me when I was taught in Bible class that the mighty Allah, the Lord of the World, was

my loving Father, and that I could talk with Him and He would answer. I had been taught that He had written my fate upon my forehead, that I should be only a girl, not even allowed to worship in the mosque. The thought that He could love me, that I was infinitely precious to Him, gave me a new self-respect.

I could not keep it to myself, this lamp Christ's love had kindled. At first my mother was horrified, but through her visits to the school she had found friends. And when I was taken ill, so ill that even the inky water from a portion of the Koran, which they gave me to drink, did not help, and every one said it was Allah's will I should die, she let Christian friends take me to the Women's Hospital. You who have so many doctors you can *choose* which to take, think what a Christian hospital means when it is the *only* place for many miles where the desperately ill can find healing. There in the care the doctor and nurses gave me, my mother found the reflected light of Christ's love.

I wish you could visit our little home now—still a simple mud-hut but without quarreling or bad words or fear. Women who at first persecuted us began little by little to visit us, and were struck by its atmosphere of peace and love. They bring their sick babies now, for my mother works in the hospital, and can teach them not to trust in blue beads to keep off "the evil eye," but in good food, cleanliness and medicine. And I, too, hold my little lamp high, as I gather other girls and teach them what has meant so much to me. It is only an humble clay lamp that I hold, but help me with your prayers, my sisters, that it may shine on others' darkness in Arabia, that they too may come to His light.

Leader: Thank you, Miriam-sister, for sharing your experience of Christ with us. You have made us realize how the touch of Christ's hand has lifted the position of womanhood in Arabia. We shall all appreciate our Christian homes more, and try to let their light stream further into the world.

Now we will turn to the delegate from a much more educated country, but one which needs Christ's light as urgently as all do. Mrs. Saito, we welcome you eagerly into our fellowship, for there are so many misunderstandings about your land that you can clear. We used to think of Japan as a land of cherryblossoms and lanterns and ladies on fans, and then since the war many have felt that Japan is cruel and ruthless. Give us the true picture of your Sunrise Kingdom and what Christ means to you there.

Mrs. Saito (stands and makes a deep bow, placing hands together about the level of her knees): Ohiyo (pron. like the state Ohio), my Honorable Sisters. I am so happy that your love has called me to share your friend-

ship here, for when we write words on paper, often they sound cold and weak, but when we look into each others' faces, then heart speaks to heart. And we women in Japan need your Christian sympathy and understanding so desperately.

You called my country the Sunrise Kingdom, but the women in Japan have waited long for the light of the Sun of Righteousness, Christ. In childhood I followed many lights, hoping they would bring me peace and joy. There was the light of Beauty. Surely God must love Japan most tenderly, for He has given her the beauty of waterfalls and wooded hill, of Fujiyama's snowy peak gleaming like a pearl above the clouds. And He has placed in our hearts a passionate awareness and love of Nature. Our whole school was let out in Spring to see the white drift of blossoms, and again in Fall when the maples flamed in crimson. But this light of Beauty lifted me to nothing higher; I did not see God's hand behind it.

I followed the lights of our ancient faiths. I went with my mother to the many Buddhist shrines where she burned her tiny candles. My father emphasized the Shinto light, with its appeal to loyalty and self-sacrifice for one's country. He would take out the great Samurai sword of our ancestors, telling my brother that he must always be ready to serve his country, dying for her, if needs be, with joy. When I asked my father how *I* could serve my country, he said I was only a girl; my country did not want or need my service. To be submissive and obedient, and think only how I could serve my family and later my husband—that was a woman's destiny. Yet how proud I was of my nation's greatness, of its heroes! But where did this light lead us? Only into narrow national pride and intolerance of other nations' deals, only to the roar of guns and the breaking of mothers' hearts.

You from the West brought us a light also—the light of your western learning and science. How eagerly we followed it, how we copied your machines and inventions and factories. Our cities now are industrialized, dark with factory smoke. Thousands of women and children toil from dawn to dusk under unspeakable conditions. The wealth produced is all in the hands of a few leading families who dominate all our political and social life; the rest of us live in a poverty and under a rigid control little better than slavery. If only America had shared the light of Christ as freely as the lights of Big Business and Armaments surely He would have led my country away from war and hatred into the Kingdom of Brotherhood and Peace.

But I thank *you* from the bottom of my heart that you who had the light of that greatest of Friends, Christ, wanted to share with us Him who

alone can save the soul of Japan. At Ferris Seminary I learned that Christ's light was the fulfilment of all the little lights I had tried to follow, for in the beauty of the earth I saw His garment, and by giving Him the deep devotion and loyalty kept for my country, I realized I was showing my nation how it might indeed achieve all its dreams of greatness by following His Kingdom of Love. Never shall I forget the joy that sang in my heart as I lit my candle that Easter day with the other schoolgirls, as a symbol that Christ's lamp had been kindled in my life.

That lamp still burns in the shrine of my Christian home, where all who come wonder at the Christian courtesy with which my husband treats me, at our happy partnership. And together with other Christian women I carry my lamp into the darkness of the industrial world, where the Y.W.C.A. and churches form clubs among the women, and at the government's own request have discussion groups as to how to reform and improve the social order. And even through the dark war clouds of hate and cruelty you hear Christian women's prayers for peace, you see them sending messages of sorrow and love to the Chinese Christians, and money and nurses for the wounded. Pray for us Japanese Christians, that these lights may not be put out by persecution or suffering, but that they may burn so brightly that some day—God grant it be soon!—they may bring the true sunrise to my country, the dawn of Christ's great Kingdom of Brotherhood and Peace. (Bows and seats herself.)

Leader: Let us all bow our heads just a moment, letting a prayer go up silently from our hearts that Japan may find peace in Christ, and that we here may help by our love and understanding. (Silence for a few moments.)

And now let us hear from the delegate from China, that great country of late so much in our hearts and prayers. Miss Spring-of-Living-Water, will you tell us what Christ means to the women of China? Is the future dark for Christ or can you give us some encouragement?

Miss Spring-of-Living-Water: I *do* bring a message of hope, sister Americans in Christ. We Chinese women love the story of the phoenix, that bird which after a hundred years of life, is consumed by fire, and then from the ashes soars, singing, upward to a glorious new life. War-torn China is going through her purifying fire of suffering and sacrifice, but by Christ's help, she too will emerge triumphant, to build a new and more glorious China.

What has Christ done for China's womanhood? For answer I point to the picture of my great grandmother, Jade Butterfly, hanging on our wall—a lovely "Peach-bloom Maiden", with three-inch bound "lily feet",

her hair coiled with jade ornaments, her satin robe exquisitely embroidered in gold. She was taught to be a model of propriety and etiquette, to embroider and play the lute, to serve her mother-in-law, "making a bow like a bamboo sapling swept by the wind." Her domain was entirely inside her home's courtyards. Never could she set her "lily feet" outside the "To-and-from-the-World Gate," except on some occasion like marriage or death.

What has brought the women of China out of their inner courtyards to the very entrance of the To-and-from-the-World Gate, and even set their feet, unbound, on errands far beyond? How is it that an author can write: "The future of modern China lies in her women"? It was accomplished by the light of Christ, through Christian education and example. No one thought of educating girls till Christian schools were started nearly a century ago. They taught His ideals of freedom, a physical freedom that led mothers to permit their girls to run on unbound feet, a mental freedom that has led to a new social order, a spiritual freedom which loosed women from rigid etiquette and customs, and taught them a joyous partnership with Christ.

It is said that more than any other persons, three Christian sisters have influenced modern Chinese history, the Soong sisters, the wife of Sun Yat Sen, the wife of Mr. Kung, the present Minister of Finance, and the wife of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

Sun Yat Sen and his wife, attacking the great barriers holding their land back—her ignorance, lack of unity, her bandits and warlords, her appalling poverty and diseases,—saw the need for trained leaders with character and ideals of service. They found them largely in the Christian Church, which had for years been a pioneer in attacking these very problems. One of every six leaders in China today is a Christian.

Two years ago the lamps of these Christian leaders seemed to be guiding China to a bright future. They shone on the darkness of her ignorance through the mass education started by General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek's New Life Movement. In it many Christian students and teachers gathered thousands of illiterates, teaching them not only to read and write, but to know Christ's love. At the Madras Conference were two of China's great women educators—Dr. Yi-Fang-Wu, President of Ginling College, whose advice carries tremendous weight with the Chinese government, and Miss Tsing, a hundred Christian graduates of whose school are in public and official posts. The government called on a Christian nurse to supervise the education of all nurses in China, and placed a Christian woman doctor in charge of the national school for midwives.

And then came the cruel war, when it seemed as if the bombs falling on church and school and hospital would quench this new light for China. But who can put out Christ's light of love? Can "anguish—or persecution —or danger—or the sword"? No, we Chinese say with Paul, we are "more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Missionaries and Christian Chinese have held so high their lamps of love, risking life itself to save others, that, Madame Chiang Kai-shek testifies, the Chinese are seeing Christ in them, and being drawn to Him as never before. And China, driven back from the seacoast, is building roads through to backward, isolated villages. On these rough new roads walk our Christian women, no longer stumbling on "lily feet", but freely, with lamps held high. Where the name of Christ had never been spoken, these lamps are showing the "light—which is radiant in the face of Christ."

Leader: How wonderful to know that good can come even from this sad war! And now let us hear from our last delegate, a representative of another land with an age-old heritage of culture and beauty and a future bright with promise. Dr. Davanbu, will you tell us what Christ means to the women of India?

Dr. Davanbu (bows slightly, placing tips of her two hands, palms together, about level of forehead): I bring you our Indian greeting: "Stoh-ti-rum", from the hearts of one hundred and sixty million women of my country. We Indians have always thought of the lamp as a symbol of the heart's devotion to God, for as the wick burns, it gives itself, its very life, in joyful sacrifice. So you will see our Hindu women placing a tiny clay lamp in the temple or before a village shrine, and at dusk lighting a brass lamp before the goddess who protects the home.

These little oil lamps are of use only within four walls, for their tiny flame flickers and goes out in a breath of wind. But for hundreds of years they were all our women needed, for they were expected by all the teachings of their faith to stay inside. A woman must be ruled by her father, then by her husband, in her old age by her sons. The Mohammedan conquest drew closer the dark curtains that shut her inside, and if behind these curtains were little girls shut off from happy childhood by early marriage, or tragic widowhood, if there was suffering or illness, why, these must be endured patiently as the destiny of womankind.

But Indian women might take for their new motto Sinbad's cry, "New lamps for old," for today they are beginning to come out from behind these dark curtains of seclusion; some still stand wistfully in their doorways, and some have already stepped into that breath-taking exhilarating new world which is the India of today. Christ's hand first led them out, for Christian missions established girls' schools when every Hindu tra-

dition and custom insisted women could not and should not learn. And there came with western education the dream of a new India, with her many races and religions somehow united and self-governing. Nationalists called on Indian women to help, and aflame with patriotism, sheltered, wellborn Hindu ladies came out to picket shops and face insults and jail. Once out, they could not be driven back! And again Christian leaders were among the first to form women's clubs and recreation centres. In 1926, the All-India Women's Conference was founded, where hundreds of cultured, educated women, Mohammedan, high-caste Brahmin and low-caste Christian, gathered to declare war on caste, on early marriage and enforced widowhood, on every social barrier that held back their country. Last year the chairman of this great gathering was a Christian princess.

Perhaps you ask what need have these women leaders of any light beyond the torch of their flaming patriotism? Think how few they are, a mere two per cent of India's millions of women; in contrast to their enlightened freedom stand ninety-eight women out of every hundred, held back by illiteracy and caste traditions from these new opportunities. Think of India's great areas of darkness still barely touched—medical need so great that the average life span is only twenty-four years, poverty such that two-thirds of her people enjoy but one scanty meal a day, the suspicions and contempt and hatred that separate her many races and religions and keep her from national unity. Where will India find a new lamp powerful enough to shine through this darkness? Listen to the answer of a non-Christian, the Minister of Health for the whole Central Province, who said she sent her children to a Christian school for only there could she find the honesty and strength of character, the ideals of unselfish service, which alone can build the new India.

Yes, India's women need the lamp of Christ to guide their steps on these new and untrod paths. His love alone can bring Brahmin and outcaste into one family; His light reaches out to the least and lowliest. I was one of these, born in an outcaste village, despised and persecuted by the caste people. It was the lamp in the hands of a simple Christian woman from the next village that shone on my darkness, Christ's hand of love that lifted me from degradation and hopelessness to His more abundant life, His message that I was a King's daughter that gave me back my self-respect.

The light that India needs gleams like a star in many a Christian village home. You see it held in the hand of women like Mrs. William of Ranipet, who in her "House by the Side of the Road" gathers Hindu and Mohammedan sisters for classes and recreation, substituting for the ashes of their petty lives the beauty of inspiration and Christian fellow-

ship. You see Christian schoolgirls carrying their lamps of service into nearby villages, cleaning up drains, building windows in airless huts to let in sunshine, and God. You see consecrated teachers and nurses fighting ignorance and pain, Christian doctors holding aloft their lamps of healing in hospital or lonely village dispensary. And as Christ's daughters lift their lamps higher, the circle of their radiant influence widens, till you find women like Mrs. Mona Hensman in the Madras Legislature, helping to make history by guiding her country to the light of Christ's ideals of brotherhood.

The lamps are still few, yet we Indian Christian women hope, nay we *know,* that through our lifted lamps our country's prayer shall some day be answered, and Christ will lead her indeed "from darkness into light, from death into His eternal life."

Leader: It has indeed been good for us to have been here, and to have shared our experiences as members of one great family in Christ. Surely we have all learned today that Christ's Kingdom can never come until *all* His children lift their lighted lamps high, making the circle of His light complete around the world.

Shall we not close with a song which echoes the prayer in each one's heart, American, Arabian, Japanese, Chinese and Indian, that Christ will kindle His lamp of love there? Let us sing then, together, as our prayer of consecration, the first and last verses of "Spirit of God, descend upon my heart." (#219, Reformed Church Hymnal)

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